

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/26/2025 10:29:17 PM

First name: Joetta

Last name: Fort

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To: Regional Foresters Jacque Buchanan and Jennifer Eberlien

My name is Joetta Fort. I live in Lynnwood WA, and I am a member of Great Old Broads for Wilderness. I am also a grandmother of two teenage boys. Pacific Northwest (PNW) forests are important to me, not only because I love to camp and hike, but also for the benefits to my grandsons.

Trees store carbon, so they have obvious beneficial effects on climate change. Slowing climate change is vitally important for future generations, but also we need to appreciate the amazing transformation that forests bring to younger generations, for only in the forest do my grandsons willingly shut off their screens. That's some kind of miracle, wrought by irreplaceable beauty, peace, and life exhibited from the forest floor to the tree canopy. I've camped and hiked with my grandsons in forests from the San Juan Islands to the Olympic Peninsula to Mt. Baker, St. Helens, Rainier and Mt. Hood. My grandsons remember and beg to return to every one of these places. I hope that someday there will be living, healthy, natural forests so my grandkids can take their children to such wild places, rather than mile after mile of industrial monocrop.

I'd like to thank you for your efforts to update the 30-year-old NW Forest Plan. I imagine there's a lot to pull together, a lot of parties involved. I especially appreciate the emphasis on tribal inclusion, which is only right considering these forests have been tribal homelands for thousands of years. I see that tribal inclusion is addressed most fully in Option B, but I'm hoping that whichever option you adopt will feature treaty rights, co-stewardship, and tribal sovereignty as important elements of the plan.

However, I'm concerned with efforts to redefine "mature" and "old growth" forests, with the intended result of increased logging. Our region's iconic old-growth forests contribute to clean water, carbon capture, and wildlife habitat. Once these forests are "harvested," they will never exist again in their current biological complexity. These forests are irreplaceable and worth conserving. And there are so few of these forests left! Protecting them is the only rational way forward.

I'm reading that logging these currently protected forests might double or even triple! But logging interests aren't the only ones you answer to. The people of the Pacific Northwest and visitors to our renowned forests have an undeniable interest in these public lands, and we, the people of the Pacific Northwest, should have a voice in protecting them.

I strongly oppose the proposed elements that increase commercial logging. Please protect trees 80 years & older, as these trees have hundreds of years of life left that they can provide all their benefits to carbon capture & wildlife habitat. It's such a small percentage of our forests & well worth protecting.